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## EDUCATIONAL NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT

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MADISON, WIS.  
September 8, 1914

*Professor C. H. Judd, Editor, "School Review"*  
*University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois:*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR JUDD: Such is your reputation for veracity,  
desire for truth,  
courage to face truth,  
willingness to have truth before your readers,  
ability to participate in an educational survey,  
understanding of present tendencies in American education,  
sense of humor,  
that I am constrained to put in your hands a few facts that may help you when undertaking future labors such as the leading editorial on page 485 of the September, 1914, *School Review*.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM H. ALLEN, *Director*

*Par. 1.* The definition of the purpose of the State Board of Public Affairs is quite inadequate.

*Par. 2.* The William Allen referred to is usually referred to editorially as William H. Allen.

The "former connection" mentioned with the Bureau of Municipal Research is *present* as well as *former*; Mr. Allen is still a director of the Bureau of Municipal Research and the Training School for Public Service, on leave of absence to serve as one director of the University of Wisconsin Survey, and to conduct certain surveys for the Milwaukee Board of Education.

The Mr. Farmer referred to is usually referred to editorially as Mr. A. N. Farmer who, in addition to "having been associated 'with' Mr. Allen in a number of public surveys" has personally directed a survey of eight normal schools for the State of Wisconsin with notable results.

"The institution with which he was connected and of which he is still director" was not merely employed by the Wisconsin (State) Board of Public Affairs in a survey of the rural schools (please see last paragraph of this letter) but to make the survey; the institution raised the money to furnish the men to make a study such as had not yet been made; on the record of the rural-school survey the same group was asked to make

the state-wide normal-school study and later the university survey for Wisconsin.

"His connection with the New York City Survey" has not only "been a subject of general knowledge" but a subject of general understanding and fair treatment, the *School Review* being the only popular or educational journal in the country that has enjoyed misrepresenting the facts about such connection.

*Par. 3-4.* Your editorial estimate of the time which numerous instructors say was profitably spent in filling out the survey questionnaire is an underestimate.

The two other specific questions which you suggest are difficult, if not impossible, to answer, or are confusing, are shown by results not to have been confusing; and instead of bringing out trivial criticisms they brought out helpful suggestions.

*Par. 4.* The person referred to as having "acquaintance with university life—merely that of a student and a professional inquirer" has had work as student in Carleton College and the following universities: Chicago, Leipzig, Berlin, Pennsylvania, and Harvard; had one year as instructor of undergraduate work at the University of Pennsylvania and another second year with a graduate seminar at the University of Pennsylvania.

*Par. 5.* The question as to how often members of the faculty have consulted with the president and the deans need not be based on the assumption that the president of a university has acquaintance in detail with departments; in fact, that question like a great many others is based upon a desire to know and not upon any assumptions; there are those who wonder why 108 out of 140 consultations in one large college, involving several hundred instructors, were by one instructor and what that signifies as to avenues of knowledge open to his superior officer.

*Par. 6.* Not a scintilla of evidence is there that the University of Wisconsin's organization is to be attacked. The president, the overwhelming majority of the faculty, and the regents unreservedly have co-operated with this study. Not an indication is there that the democracy of Wisconsin has had any difficulty in understanding the university, so far as it has been given information.

Your reference to the officials of the State of Wisconsin is a gratuitous affront (so long as you fail to support it), based upon lack of knowledge or malicious distortion of knowledge.

Instead of "invading" examinations for the higher degrees, the investigators were invited by the dean of the graduate school.

The statement as worded, "Students are asked questions with regard to the value of different courses" is untrue. Absolutely untrue is the statement, which you have been cautious enough to attribute to others, that "the

inquirers threatened to subpoena these students and make them answer questions, as the state's witnesses."

The rules of the University of Wisconsin now authorize "the faculties of the university as official servants of the commonwealth to subpoena students for various purposes."

"Members of the faculty whose research work is being critically scrutinized" now need no law such as you propose "to draw in witnesses who could support the case in behalf of research." They have been urged to supply such witnesses, every one of whom has been heard. Moreover, as has been repeatedly stated publicly long before your visit to the university as a lecturer this summer session, all statements of fact are being and will be submitted to the university before publication or before use for conclusions, for confirmation or modification according to any further evidence, if such exists.

*Par. 7.* The statement which you repeat "as understood" . . . "that some of the inquirers in this case are very doubtful about the value of studies of ancient history and of the remoter fields of science" is infinitely less fair to the inquirers than your method of reaching conclusions without information.

Your concluding paragraph regarding the department of education would have sounded differently if you had frankly told your readers how you happened to be at the University of Wisconsin, from whom you secured your misinformation, and your personal interest in the personalities connected with what you call the experimental school.

Not "rumor" but *repeated public statement* might have been your authority for saying that the department of education is receiving special attention. By advance agreement with President Van Hise, before the survey was formally begun, the department of education and the courses for the training of teachers were studied in detail, partly, as announced in the newspapers, because it was possible to organize immediately for study in the short time left, and partly because President Van Hise took the position that in specially examining the work for the training of teachers we would be studying what ought to be the university's strongest points.

*Par. 8.* What you call "the experimental school" is referred to at the university in legal documents as the "School for Demonstration and Practice." Had you passed on to your readers what was available and had been publicly reiterated, you would have told them that the University of Wisconsin survey is to result not in a "body of opinions," but in *statements of fact*.

The so-called "experimental school" is not "connected with the department of education" in the sense you imply.

The Wisconsin rural-school survey referred to was unlike your Boise City survey, for example, in that every one of its statements of fact was supported by a definite record that was filed in the official archives. Not one of its specific facts was publicly attacked. Upon its facts over two dozen remedial bills were passed by the Wisconsin legislature. No less an authority on the needs of the State of Wisconsin than Professor E. C. Elliott, chairman of the committee on accredited schools and director of what you call the experimental school, and whose "character and work" you emphasize, issued a public statement about the survey to the people of Wisconsin, Friday, October 7, 1912. After mentioning the fact that a joint committee had gone into the rural-school survey constructive program; and after listing among the members of the committee, in whose name he was addressing the people of the state, Messrs. Reinsch, Hohlfeld, Kahlenberg, Monroe, Thomas, and Babcock; and after stating that it was at the request of the committee that he submitted a report; he wrote the following words which, as you see, are quite in contrast with your editorial: "The proposals contained in the program to which we have given special attention and upon which we desire to pass evidence, are those stated below. *We are convinced that these proposals are thoroughly sound in principle and in full accord with the best educational thought of the day.* We consider that immediate attention to each of them is necessary for the improvement of the quality of the rural schools of the state." After the study was completed and after the little specious opposition that existed had been thoroughly voiced, Professor Elliott asked the help of Mr. Lindholm, who had been in charge of the rural-school survey, on one of his graduate courses, which is announced in the catalogue for 1912-13 in part as follows: "232*b*. Practicum in educational legislation—a study of contemporary legislative movements with special reference to public education—elementary and secondary, etc., Mr. Elliott, Mr. McCarthy (jointly supervising the survey), and Mr. Lindholm (directly in charge of survey field work)."

MADISON, WIS.

September 11, 1914

*Professor C. H. Judd, Editor "School Review"*

*University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois:*

MY DEAR PROFESSOR JUDD: Your letter to the effect that the *School Review* will print in full my communication to you of September 8 quite overwhelms me. My letter was addressed to you rather than to a larger audience. I am very glad to reach the larger audience, but hope that you will be able to make the few amendments herein given so that your readers need not be confused.

Page 555, line 6 from bottom: please read: "the institution with which he (Mr. Allen) . . . ."

Page 556, line 9 from top: please insert: "*University of Wisconsin survey.*"

Page 556, line 24 from top: please insert the word "survey," so as to read: "like a great many other *survey questions.*"

Page 556, fourth line from bottom: please change so as to read: "by the dean of the graduate school *to visit such examination.*"

Page 557, line 5 from top: please add: ". . . various purposes. *Hence your suggested amendment to law is not needed.*"

Page 557, line 12 from bottom: please change to "*for studying them in the short time between May 1 and commencement.*"

Page 558, line 8 from top: please correct "work" to read "*worth.*"

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM H. ALLEN, *Director*

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### INDUSTRIAL EDUCATION IN WISCONSIN

An authoritative statement by Mr. Warren E. Hicks, state director of industrial education in Wisconsin, has done a great service in setting squarely before the public the real facts concerning the progress of the industrial education movement in that state. Much has been said and written about the achievements of the continuation schools organized under the statutes of 1911, the oldest of which has been in operation about two years. Many of the claims made for these schools have been extravagant, prejudiced, and wholly misleading. This statement by Mr. Hicks serves at once to correct these errors and to bring to light with startling clearness the great service which the Wisconsin plan is doing the cause of public education.

There has been considerable controversy as to whether these continuation schools are really effective in accomplishing the purpose for which they were created. It has been asserted on the one hand that these schools were providing a genuine vocational education for the large group of children compelled under the new law to attend them for a period of four or five hours a week. For example, an article by Mr. H. E. Miles, chairman of the Wisconsin Commission on Industrial Education, would lead one to think that the pupils are receiving instruction which is contributing immediately to their vocational efficiency, and furthermore that they are doing so by virtue of the fact that the continuation schools are entirely unlike the regular public schools in the opportunities which they offer in organization, and especially in the character and quality of the teaching. In the article above noted, Mr. Miles says:

Is the Wisconsin work truly vocational? When twenty-five little boys from a factory where they help make wooden toys are taught the scientific

meaning and use of the tools of their trade, the answer is obvious. Also, it is plain when thirty-five young druggists, eighteen to thirty-five years of age, are instructed in their trade by a college graduate and general manager of a successful drug manufacturing company, and by a member of the State Board of Pharmacists, the proprietor of a successful retail drug store, a highly skilled and accomplished gentleman; or, when classes of apprentices are taught after the fashion of the best trade schools, and when fifty young girls getting \$3.50 a week are taken from a department store, and are so bettered in their occupation as to delight the employer, who first yielded reluctantly to the requirement that they come to school. Similarly the answer is clear when fifty working mechanics are given instruction in very simple mathematics because they are really "fourth graders" and must brush up on arithmetic before they can do those things for which they particularly come to the school. So, equally to the writer's mind, was the school vocational for the boy who was taken off the street at sixteen after two years of truancy and idleness, and who elected woodworking and after a few weeks found a place in a woodworking establishment and went on with his schooling and his work. So, the Wisconsin schools are vocational for innumerable children gathered from the four corners, who first elect an occupation and then are taught by whatever humble processes in the first steps of that occupation and, by the hearty, earnest, joint effort of employer, employee, parent, and schoolmaster, are helped to places in progressive employment.

The statement by Mr. Hicks shows that possibly 80 per cent of all the children attending these schools can be given little or nothing that will contribute to their vocational efficiency except by such training as will fit them for some other trade or occupation than that in which they are now engaged. The following excerpts from the statement will clearly illustrate this point:

In comparison with the whole number of people employed in the trades, the number of indentured apprentices, that is, apprentices who hold written contracts with employers, is distressingly small. The alleged apprentice, as a rule, has only an oral agreement, if any at all, and therefore gets his instruction, if he gets it at all, after working a full day, by attending trade extension evening classes. . . . The time is already here, however, when any worker who shows that he has a desire within him to be more efficient in his occupation, does not need to go to the evening class instruction. He may get it in a *Continuation Trade Extension Day School*, and he may get it without loss of wages.

It should be noticed that in so far as apprentices are concerned, the Wisconsin plan presents an opportunity rather than an accomplishment.

Girls under sixteen years, employed on labor permits, call forth a more complex problem. Here in Wisconsin we have a group of about 4,000 girls

with an average age of fifteen years, earning approximately three dollars per week. . . . They are employed in candy making, canning and bottling, and finishing and sewing for tailors and knitters, spinning, spooling and winding, machine knitting, taping, turning gloves and lining, pasting and labelling, cash and messenger service, etc. The question is what kind of a continuation school shall be provided for them.

Can we say that they are engaged in a recognized, profitable employment? Can we say that they have made a choice of occupation? Can we say that they wish to increase their efficiency in the chosen occupation? . . .

The people who have dreams that these permit girls should have trade extension courses exclusively get a shock when they learn that out of the 4,000 girls, 500 hold the same job less than one month, 1,000 hold the job less than three months, 1,000 less than six months, 1,000 less than two years, and barely 25 hold the same jobs for two years.

It may be added that, of the 4,000 girls, approximately 500 may be classified in the established schools in the fifth grade or below; 1,500, in the sixth; 1,000 in the seventh; 500, in the eighth; 500, above the eighth.

What shall we do with the boys under sixteen who enroll in a continuation school? Take 4,000 of these boys for consideration. Their average age is fifteen years. . . . They earn on an average a little more than four dollars per week. They are employed in making shoes, as messenger and delivery boys, office and errand boys, timekeepers, packing and wrapping, folding and filing, tending, and such simple tasks generally. The educational value of their work is very little if any at all.

It must be said that these boys are generally not in a regular, profitable employment, that they have not already determined their aim to remain in and become efficient in any employment. . . .

Only a limited number of these boys are now employed in occupations in which they will be engaged in the future. Hence, Continuation Trade Extension Day Courses are possible only with a very few of them, possibly 400 or 500 of the 4,000.

Only a limited number of these boys who are lacking in general education will be greatly helped by general improvement in academic courses, possibly only another 400 of the 4,000 under consideration. The dominant service, therefore, seems to be in the activity of the Trade Preparatory Courses, which provide for instruction in a trade or occupation not followed by its pupils during the balance of the working day.

Under the Wisconsin law, permit children must attend the continuation school five hours a week for six months a year, a total of approximately one hundred and thirty hours. Of this time, fifty-two hours must be spent in the study of English, citizenship, sanitation and hygiene, and the use of safety devices. This leaves seventy-eight hours a year, which may be devoted to trade preparatory work.



In prevocational schools, from three hundred and sixty to five hundred and forty hours are available for such work. As the children are about the same age as these permit children, it will be seen that the prevocational school is much more likely to give an effective industrial training.

We would not have it appear that we are criticizing unfavorably the effort which the state of Wisconsin is making to solve the problems of industrial education. We are inclined to think that, however extravagant are the claims which have been made for this system, a far greater service has been done by the state in organizing these schools than has been claimed by their most prejudiced advocates. But we are inclined to think that this service consists primarily in showing to the educators of Wisconsin and to all thoughtful educators the country over the pertinent facts regarding the condition and characteristics of the retarded and eliminated children of the regular public-school system.

Many studies in retardation and elimination have been made, but probably nowhere in the country has there been the same opportunity to study intensively and for a considerable period of time all or nearly all the eliminated children in an entire state. If the law of Wisconsin had been devised for the specific purpose of making possible this one study, the results could not have been better.

These results show that the training now being given in the continuation schools should have been made available to the vast majority of these pupils at least one or two years earlier; in other words, while they were in the regular school system. They prove that prevocational work should be introduced into the upper elementary grades of the Wisconsin schools and made available for all children of thirteen years of age or over.

When such an enlargement of the regular public schools is inaugurated, then the four or five hours a week of continuation-school training can accomplish the genuine vocational work which some of its advocates erroneously believe that it is doing today.

F. M. L.

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#### THE GIRL AND ALGEBRA

The demand that girls be allowed to graduate from the high school without any algebra is not new. The question has been discussed throughout the country by parents and teachers, by administrative officers, and professors of education. The friends of algebra demand that it be retained. They insist that a certain amount of algebraic

knowledge is considered essential to one who hopes to be successful in commercial and industrial lines, since algebra continues the study of arithmetic; and that, like the other branches of mathematics, algebra is peculiarly adapted to train the mind in expressing correct thought in correct language, in accuracy, in originality, and logical reasoning. On the other hand, the foes of algebra deny that the study of algebra is of much value to the young pupil. They wish to see it sidetracked, because it is not immediately useful. Some even contend that it is known to have injured the mind, destroyed the health, and wrecked the lives of thousands of children.

It is reported that Dr. J. H. Francis, superintendent of the Los Angeles schools, has raised an entirely new point against algebra in an address before the National Education Association at St. Paul, Minnesota. He is said to have observed that girls who study algebra face a terrible doom because of its soul-destroying qualities. "God bless the girl," the reports have him exclaim, "who refuses to study algebra. It is a study that has caused many a girl to lose her soul." In place of algebra, Dr. Francis recommends courses in costume designing, for "there is more art in one well-made garment than in all the art galleries of Europe."

This statement has been criticized in various newspapers, both favorably and unfavorably. "Glad tidings of great joy in the United States," exclaims an enthusiast. "With a boldness equal to that of Thomas Payne, an educator stood before the teachers of the nation and made a plea for human mercy and kindness—that girls should never hereafter be taught algebra." "God bless the teacher," said another, "who had the good sense and the courage to get up before the greatest educational body in the world and speak the truth." A third writer says "it is an extreme view," and still another, evidently refusing to be alarmed, suspects that "his indictment of algebra is somewhat inflated and inflamed by summer heat."

The alleged statement of Dr. Francis and some of the views expressed in the newspapers all point to the fact that there exists dissatisfaction with the way algebra is taught in a large number of schools and that there is a demand for something better to take its place. Algebra when taught as a manipulation of symbols which have meaning only in algebra is a subject for mature minds. To present it in this manner to a child is a mistake. For years the friends of algebra have recognized this fact and have been at work to reconstruct this valuable subject so that it can be understood and enjoyed by young pupils. However, it takes

time and study to work out a plan different from the customary course. That progress is being made is easily seen from a careful comparison of some of the latest textbooks with the older books. Changes have been made mainly along the following lines: much abstract work is omitted or postponed to a later stage; the subject is being vitalized by bringing it in touch with real life; the processes of algebra are illustrated and represented concretely by using space material. The important problem before the teachers of secondary mathematics is to go on with the process of reconstructing algebra, or the whole course if necessary, until we have a course adapted to the pupil's mind. There is no reason why such a course should not form a good foundation for boys and girls who expect to go to college as well as be of practical value to those who do not go to college.

The main question is not now whether algebra is more difficult for girls than for boys. Most likely it is not. In many carefully graded tests the writer has found that girls often excel boys in algebra. Nor is the question whether a girl should learn things besides what will be of immediate use to her in her household work. If a study is of such educational importance as to be required of boys, there is no reason why it should be less valuable for girls. To make algebra, or all high-school mathematics, elective would be a change welcome to most teachers of mathematics, as it is easier and more pleasant to teach a group of pupils taking the work because they have chosen it. However, this would rob many of the opportunity even to find out whether or not they like the subject or are able to do the work successfully.

As to the nature of a course in secondary mathematics best adapted to the pupil's mental growth, it is difficult to know just what it should be. It may be that algebra, being more difficult and abstract than the easier geometry, should not be the first subject taught; it may be that algebra and geometry should be taught side by side. In the meantime, criticism of the old course may be justified and even desirable. But let those who agitate against the old and unsatisfactory also support and help formulate the new until we have a course well tried out and so well adjusted that it can be taught successfully by the ordinary teacher and be valuable not only to boys but to girls.

E. R. BRESLICH

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO HIGH SCHOOL

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In the September number of this journal mention was made of the action of the University of Michigan which makes it possible for graduates of a reorganized high school to gain advanced credit in the university.

The high schools are making plans to meet this offer of the university. The following quotation from the *Detroit Journal* outlines the plan in that city:

A revolution has begun in the organization of the Detroit school system.

When all the expected changes are accomplished, which may take two or three years and may require new legislation for some departures, Detroit will have a school system divided as follows:

Elementary schools, running from the first through the sixth grade.

Junior high schools, running from the seventh through the ninth grade.

Senior high schools, running from the tenth through the twelfth grade.

Junior college work, including the first and second years' studies of the university course.

This is the entire transformation to be effected. The chief machinery for bringing the changes about will be in the new high schools recently erected or authorized. The Northwestern is now in operation, but the estimators have allowed for the McMichael, the Northern, the Southeastern, and the Southwestern.

Detroit already has one "six-year high school." The McMillan School, in the Eighteenth Ward, has been the experimenting ground. At the beginning of the present term all pupils from the seventh grade on were placed in charge of the high-school teachers, and elementary Latin, foreign languages, algebra, and other high-school subjects were taken up by them. As a matter of formal organization the old system had to be kept, but the "six-year high school" is there.

It is announced that State Superintendent Keeler has outlined a course of study to accord with the new plan, as reported in the *Lansing Journal*:

#### SIX YEARS OF HIGH SCHOOL

A feature of Superintendent Keeler's plan is to permit students to choose the line of work which they may wish to pursue in the seventh instead of the ninth grade. In effect his plan would make the high-school course one of six years and "the grades" of equal length. It is believed by the state superintendent that the large number of children who now leave school in seventh and eighth grades will be held in school by giving them work which meets especially with their needs.

The plan also enables schools to teach all grades above the sixth by the departmental plan, that is, by having a special teacher for each subject. Moreover, the student will advance by passing subjects instead of grades. "Present conditions in Michigan schools are such that the proposed plan can be adopted easily," declares Superintendent Keeler.